

# 2018-19 Evaluation of the Leadership Development Program

Rosemary Garcia-Rincón, B.S.

EA19-146-4

## At-a-Glance

The Leadership Development (LD) Program in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provided professional development (PD) for campus administrators (principals and assistant principals) and executive directors (EDs). The PD was based on School Leadership Department priorities of balanced literacy, professional learning communities (PLCs), blended learning, and diverse student needs. The focus for all PD included, but was not limited to:

- sound decision-making,
- curriculum and instruction,
- recognizing good instructional practices,
- coaching and feedback,
- climate and culture,
- district systems,
- recruiting and retaining high quality staff,
- community engagement, and
- student support systems.

The LD program was supported by \$599,167 in Title I funding (a decrease from \$1,414,657 in 2017-18). This money was used for contracted services, supplies and materials, and other operating expenses (e.g., travel).

At the request of the School Leadership ED, the 2018-19 evaluation focused on the Assistant Principal Professional Development (APPD) program and two outside contracted programs: Principal Impact Collaborative (PIC) and Teaching Trust (TT). The purpose of this evaluation was to examine 2018-19 program implementation. This report includes summaries of program attendance data and the perceptions and experiences of program participants. LD staff members collected and provided information to the evaluator. Surveys also were administered by either the evaluator or program staff members. The evaluator used district Climate Survey data to examine the climate of Teaching Trust participant campuses.

## Leadership Development Programs

### Assistant Principal Professional Development

The APPD program provided professional development for a select group of assistant principals (APs). One AP from each district campus participated in five monthly sessions from September 2018 through February 2019 (see Table 1 for session attendance). Participants were assigned by network to attend either morning or afternoon sessions. The three-hour sessions were held at the Edison Learning Center. The first 150 minutes covered Leverage Leadership, while the remaining 30 minutes were spent on additional topics.

**Table 1: 2018-19 Assistant Principal Professional Development Training Sessions and Attendance**

| Date               | Topic                             | N   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| September 19, 2018 | DDI and Planning                  | 208 |
| October 24, 2018   | Planning and Leading Planning     | 199 |
| November 14, 2018  | Observation and Feedback          | 176 |
| December 11, 2018  | Supporting and Developing Culture | 159 |
| February 13, 2019  | Finding Your Time                 | 144 |

Source: APPD program staff members, May 10, 2019.

Note: Participant totals are combined for a.m. and p.m. sessions. DDI = Data-Driven Instruction. APPD = Assistant Principal Professional Development.

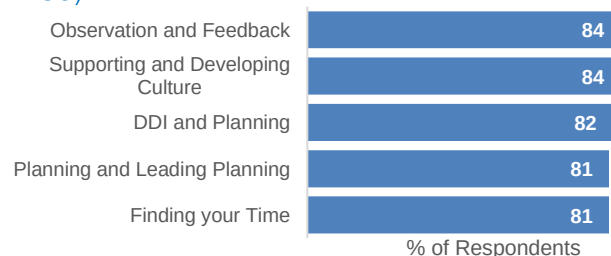
Network EDs signed up to design and lead, taking turns presenting different topics. As observed by the evaluator at the November 14<sup>th</sup> training session, the presentations included a homework debrief, discussions, videos, pair activities, role-playing, and a homework assignment. Scripts were provided with the homework assignment for practicing activities with campus staff members. Homework activities were supported by campus principals.

### Assistant Principal PD Surveys

The evaluator collaborated with the program manager to develop an online survey for participating APs to collect feedback on program perceptions. An invitation was sent to 217 participants between March 20 and April 5, 2019 to complete the survey. The evaluator used frequency analyses to summarize findings. A total of 135 APs (62%) completed the survey. Of these, 52 percent had attended all five training sessions (attendance was mandatory).

High percentages of respondents believed they would use what they learned in APPD. A range of 81 to 84 percent of respondents said they would use what they learned in each training session between 61 and 100 percent of the time at campuses (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: 2018-19 Percent of APPD Participants Who Would Apply Training Topics (61 to 100% of Time) (N=135)**



Source: 2018-19 APPD survey.

Note: APPD = Assistant Principal Professional Development. DDI = Data-Driven Instruction.

Most principals (91%) rated the professional development training at least somewhat high quality. As shown in Figure 2, perceptions regarding all training provided by the APPD were positive (range: 61% to 96%). The lowest rates of respondents agreed the location was suitable (69%) and the meeting facilities were adequate and comfortable (61%).

**Figure 2: 2018-19 Participant Perceptions of the Assistant Principal Professional Development Program (N=135)**



Source: 2018-19 Assistant Principal Professional Development survey.

Eighty-seven participants (64%) provided suggestions for improving the APPD. The top three recommendation topics included:

- **Training (n=26):** invite all APs, include principals, full-day training, summer training, start at beginning of school year, more hands-on activities, continue to split by campus level, organize for sufficient practice time;
- **Meeting accommodations (n=12):** more central location, adequately sized meeting rooms, comfortable room temperature; and
- **Time (n=11):** more time to practice and collaborate or less content to cover.

### Principal Impact Collaborative (PIC)

The PIC, a two-year program for a select group of North Texas area principals, has partnered with the Dallas ISD since 2016. With a goal of building and retaining

more effective campus leaders, the program aims to develop principal leadership skills that support idea development, effective project management, and sustained impact. It offered networking and sharing of best practices with like-minded leaders, one-on-one coaching, and site visits to exemplary campuses. Candidates were recruited through information sessions and selected through a competitive process.

Each year, a new cohort of participants (approximately 30) is selected from area school districts. The 2018-19 cohort included 11 Dallas ISD principals (six elementary and five secondary). One principal dropped out in January 2019; 10 participants completed the program.

The PIC provided monthly PD from September 2018 through April 2019. The workshops included leadership development along with an immersive experience into the design process. In addition, participants received support as they developed and executed a “big idea” action project designed to drive campus improvement. The PD content areas included change management and leadership, building trust, communicating for results, managing up, and succession planning.

PIC participants attended workshops on Thursdays (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and Fridays (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.) at different locations around the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The second year of the program includes continued workshops with more focus on individual campus projects.

### Principal Impact Collaborative Surveys

The evaluator developed an online survey to collect Dallas ISD PIC participant perceptions about program experiences. The survey was administered from May 5, 2019 to June 5, 2019. The evaluator used frequency analyses to summarize results.

Nine of 10 principals invited (90%) completed the survey. All respondents (100%) agreed (agree or strongly agree) with the following statements about the PIC: 1) training session objectives were clearly defined; 2) trainers were knowledgeable and well prepared about the topics; 3) sessions provided appropriate and relevant knowledge and skills for their professional growth; and 4) the program met their expectations. Most (89%) of respondents agreed that 1) all scheduled workshops were manageable to attend and 2) the allocated time for each workshop was sufficient.

All respondents (100%) also were satisfied (satisfied or highly satisfied) with site visits and that the program helped to improve leadership skills in key areas (prioritizing self-care, inspiring others, identifying and prioritizing needs, designing solutions and executing for results). All respondents (100%) highly rated the quality of PIC training (very good or excellent).

Almost half of respondents (44%) indicated that applying design thinking in decision processes and creating solutions was the topic that most positively impacted their role as principals in 2018-19. The most frequently mentioned program-related challenges (all 33%) were personal growth goals (e.g., tracking progress in a timely manner) and the time spent off campus.

Suggestions for improving the PIC program were diverse (all 11%), and included 1) bringing teams together on occasion, 2) increasing the number of site visits to exemplary schools, 3) differentiating PD based on individual needs, 4) presenting personal growth training at the beginning of the school year, and 5) saving time by reducing the number of whole-group presentation share-outs.

The PIC program staff members also administered satisfaction surveys in spring 2019 to collect feedback on the PIC experience and suggestions for future improvement. Because program staff members were unable to provide Dallas ISD data separately from all area participants, results are not provided in this report.

### **Teaching Trust (TT)**

Partnering with Dallas ISD since 2015-16, TT focuses on preparing educators by developing the values and skills necessary to produce transformational and lasting school and district change. The program aims to build teacher and leader capacity to create a culture of excellence that will drive and sustain elevated student achievement. TT programs implemented in the Dallas ISD in 2018-19 included the Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP) and Leadership Teams (TEAMS). This report includes data for district participants in ALP cohort seven ( $N=18$ ; 14 campuses) and TEAMS cohort one ( $N=41$ ; seven campuses). The evaluator was unable to obtain post-program hiring and retention information from the program.

### **Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP)**

The ALP is a five-year program offered in partnership with the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development at Southern Methodist University (SMU). The program trains future campus leaders to lead effective teams and drive improvement in complex urban schools. For the first program year, while working full-time, participants complete rigorous coursework led by SMU faculty and TT staff members. In year two, the resident year, participants serve in a campus leadership role (coaches, assistant principals, principals), implementing strategies and skills in real time, with a TT coach providing on-the-job coaching and support. Following year two, residents earn an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership with a specialization in Urban School Leadership from SMU, along with principal

certification. For the final three years of the program, Aspiring Leaders receive ongoing support and development that is tailored to individual needs.

### **Leadership Teams (TEAMS)**

TEAMS is a year-long program focused on development of strong campus leadership teams. Participants may include principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and some EDs.

The program provides practice-based training, workshops, and on-campus coaching to implement high-leverage professional practices. Practices emphasizes accountable teams, led and modeled by leadership and rolled out to teacher-led teams at the department, grade, or content level. These teams worked with a coach to improve effectiveness, establish common goals, and create systems to dramatically increase student achievement. The program focuses on: 1) establishing a high-expectations campus culture, including tracking achievement data, 2) implementing data-driven instruction, 3) developing a "Plan for Change," and 4) "Living the Learning" through high-fidelity implementation of the "Plan for Change."

### **2018-19 Teaching Trust Program Surveys**

TT staff members created and administered separate surveys (May 2019) to 18 ALP and 41 TEAMS participants to collect feedback about experiences in the two TT programs. TT staff members provided response frequencies and open-ended comments to the evaluator, who summarized the data for this report.

### **ALP Survey Results**

Because response rates to the ALP survey were exceedingly low (28%,  $n=5$ ), results should be reviewed with caution. Respondents generally were positive about experiences in ALP. Most (80%) indicated that program-provided learning and professional opportunities helped their growth as campus leaders and that principals were actively engaged in their leadership development. Also, all respondents (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that 1) TT exemplified its values; 2) field coaches provided competency-based feedback and action steps that helped with growth as campus leaders; 3) TT was of high quality; and 4) they would recommend the program to others.

General respondent feedback included the need for more clarity on capstone assignments during the year to reduce final paper confusion and more capstone aligned work during the year. With respect to check-ins, respondents suggested that the program should stress that principals not interrupt check-ins and include at least one check-in per semester when the field coach and mentor principal provide feedback concurrently. Regarding logistics, respondents suggested keeping

logistics consistent to reduce issues with finding information, classes, and resources; and posting information, descriptions, and assignments on time.

## TEAMS Survey Results

About half of invited TEAMS participants completed the survey (51%). In general, respondents were positive about TEAMS and TT. All (100%) responded favorably about overall program operations, communications, and logistics. All respondents (100%) also agreed or strongly agreed that 1) TT exemplifies its core values; 2) training provided tools to be a stronger leader; 3) session content advanced student achievement; and 4) training was high quality, overall. Most respondents (76%) would recommend the program to others.

With respect to TEAMS, 48 percent of respondents believed the overall experience of TEAMS was beneficial and productive. Nineteen respondents (90%) provided suggestions for changes, including 1) training (i.e., only during week, fewer/shorter sessions, more for bilingual teachers, improve role playing); 2) more collaboration; and 3) feedback (i.e., increased quantity, clearer processes).

## Spring 2019 Climate Surveys

The 2018-19 district Climate Survey was administered to all campus-based professional and support staff members by Hanover Research, which provided the favorable response rate data provided in this report.

With few exceptions, favorable response rates on all scales for most campuses with ALP participants were below the district level (Table 2). Climate Survey positive response rates on the four scales for campuses with TEAMS participants, however, were mostly above district rates (Table 3).

**Table 2: 2019 ALP Campus Climate Survey Favorable Response Rates by Scale**

| Campus                   | Part<br>N | BP<br>% | CE<br>% | FS<br>% | CGC<br>% |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| <b>Elementary School</b> |           |         |         |         |          |
| G.W. Bush                | 1         | 78      | 65      | 68      | 91       |
| N.J. Cochran             | 3         | 70      | 53      | 66      | 65       |
| F. Douglass              | 1         | 84      | 72      | 73      | 89       |
| T.C. Gooch               | 1         | 80      | 62      | 65      | 90       |
| E.M. Pease               | 1         | 82      | 60      | 76      | 88       |
| O.M. Roberts             | 1         | 72      | 49      | 61      | 75       |
| T.G. Terry               | 2         | 70      | 59      | 64      | 89       |
| <b>Middle School</b>     |           |         |         |         |          |
| R.T. Hill                | 1         | 75      | 51      | 61      | 77       |
| B.E. Dade                | 1         | 66      | 45      | 47      | 57       |
| Kennedy-Curry            | 1         | 68      | 50      | 56      | 71       |
| T.C. Marsh               | 2         | 50      | 41      | 31      | 55       |
| <b>High School</b>       |           |         |         |         |          |
| Trinidad Garza           | 1         | 97      | 94      | 96      | 100      |
| Hillcrest                | 1         | 65      | 52      | 50      | 72       |
| North Dallas             | 1         | 75      | 58      | 62      | 67       |
| <b>District</b>          | -         | 79      | 68      | 70      | 84       |

Source: Spring 2019 district Climate Survey.

Note: Part=participants. BP=Beliefs and Priorities. CE=Positive Culture and Environment. FS=Culture of Feedback and Support. CGC=College-Going Culture. Rates in **blue bold** exceed district rates.

**Table 3: 2019 TEAMS Campus Climate Survey Favorable Response Rates by Scale**

| Campus          | Part<br>N | BP<br>% | CE<br>% | FS<br>% | CGC<br>% |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| C. Chavez       | 6         | 89      | 78      | 80      | 98       |
| P.L. Dunbar     | 6         | 93      | 89      | 95      | 91       |
| L.L. Hotchkiss  | 6         | 89      | 77      | 86      | 94       |
| Maple Lawn      | 5         | 78      | 59      | 73      | 92       |
| M.L. King       | 5         | 99      | 98      | 99      | 100      |
| E.M. Pease      | 6         | 82      | 60      | 76      | 88       |
| J.J. Rhoads     | 7         | 69      | 50      | 56      | 74       |
| <b>District</b> | -         | 79      | 68      | 70      | 84       |

Source: Spring 2019 district Climate Survey.

Note: Part=participants. BP=Beliefs and Priorities. CE=Positive Culture and Environment. FS=Culture of Feedback and Support. CGC=College-Going Culture. Rates in **blue bold** exceed district rates.

## Recommendations

- **Continue to build on the strengths of programs, using suggestions from surveys.** Perceptions regarding training programs were mostly positive, and respondents provided many suggestions that could improve experiences in the future.
- **Consider how climate survey results could be used to enhance the ALP program.** The favorable response rates for campuses with ALP participants mostly were below district rates. Leadership should determine how the program potentially could be used for content targeted toward supporting campus climate growth.

## References

Garcia-Rincón, R. (2018). 2017-18 Evaluation of the Leadership Development Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

An electronic version of this report can be found at [www.dallasisd.org/Page/888](http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888). For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at [evaluation@dallasisd.org](mailto:evaluation@dallasisd.org).

© 2019 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:

Dallas ISD

Department of Evaluation and Assessment

H. B. Bell School Support Service Center

2909 N. Buckner Blvd.

Box 10

Dallas, TX 75228